1608/340.

# *The* SPEECH *of Sir* John Knight *of* Briſtol, *againſt the Bill for a general* NATURALIZATION *in* 1693.

Mr. SPEAKER,

I HAVE heard of a Ship in a violent Storm in Danger of periſhing every Moment, when the good Commander ſeeing their Condition, and apprehending Death, deſired his Crew to aſſiſt with a Reſolution to preſerve themſelves and the Ship, which the Sailors refuſing to do, he retired to his Cabbin, humbled himſelf in Prayer, and implored the Powers that alone can ſave in Time of Need, that though the Ship and Company might be juſtly ſwallowed up for the Diſobedience of the Sailors, yet that he and his Cabbin might ſuffer no Damage.

Sir, I cannot, as that good Commander did, be ſo vain as to hope, that either myſelf, or the Place for which I ſerve, can be preſerved from the general Inundation, which this Bill, we are debating lets in, on the Liberties of my native Country and Countrymen; and therefore be unconcerned for the Good of *England*, provided *Briſtol* were ſafe: To hope for, and expect Happineſs in Life, when all Mankind but myſelf are dead, would not be more deceiving, than

than to propoſe Comfort and Security to myſelf and Corporation, when Strangers are admitted to poſſeſs and enjoy, by a Law, all that is valuable in the Kingdom; for this Bill doth enfranchize all Strangers, that will ſwear and proteſt againſt Popery, with the Liberties of every *Engliſhman*, after the vaſt Expence of Treaſure and *Engliſh* Blood it hath coſt this Kingdom, in all Times and Ages of our Foreſathers, to ſecure to themſelves and their Poſterity.

Wherefore, Mr. *Speaker*, I muſt beg Pardon, if at this Time I cannot ſit ſilent, but expreſs a zealous Concern, as well for the Kingdom in general, as for the Place I repreſent in particular; and I am more moved thereunto, whilſt I ſee ſo many Members ſent here by their Country, for the Conſervation of the *Engliſhmens* Liberties, ſo warm as to part with all to Strangers with one Vote.

The Argument of the honourable Perſon near me, to render all the Care of our Foreſathers of no Eſteem amongſt us, who are, or ought to be, the Repreſentatives of the Kingdom, was to prove, that this Age and Generation are wiſer (he did not ſay honeſter) than the former.

I remember a Weſt-Countryman, many Years paſt, undertook to prove the ſame to me and my Company beyond Sea, by declaring that his Father was a Fool to him. I yielded him that Point, by concluding both to be ſuch, and yet our Foreſathers might be wiſe Men.

I ſhall

I ſhall not, at this Time, queſtion the Wiſdom of thoſe who promote the Bill, or their Fathers. For myſelf, I declare in Behalf of the Wiſdom and Honeſty of our Predeceſſors; nor can I aſſent to the yielding up of the Liberties and Laws they delivered unto us, only becauſe ſome Gentlemen think better of themſelves (and perhaps miſtakenly) than of their Parents.

Sir, I was early inſtructed in Principles of Deference to the Wiſdom of our Anceſtors; and, at this Time, I tremble when I reflect on the Correction given me by my Maſter, that I might not forget, but imitate and defend, in all Times, this Rule: Let them only be accounted good, juſt, and wiſe Men, who regard and defend the Statutes, Laws, Ordinances and Liberties which their Forefathers Wiſdom and Experience obtained for themſelves and Poſterity. Now, it is my Opinion, Mr. Speaker, that if thoſe Gentlemen, who approve of this Bill, had not only been taught that Rule, but as well corrected as myſelf, they would be of my Judgment; and I wiſh that they who depart from that Rule, and ſacrifice our *Engliſh* Liberties to a Number of mercenary Foreigners, may not meet with a much more rigorous and examplary Chaſtiſement from their enraged and ruined Countrymen.

The Arguments uſed for the Bill, are in Subſtance theſe; *Firſt*, a Want of Purchaſers for our Lands; *Secondly*, of Merchants; *Thirdly*, Manufactures who can work cheaper than the

*Engliſh*

*Engliſh*; *Fourthly*, Husbandmen to till the Ground.

To all theſe I ſhall return ſhort Anſwers; but, if I debate not on them with that Advantage and Reaſon, as our Land-Admirals can (no doubt) with great Ingenuity on Sea-Politicks, I hope the Houſe will pardon me; for my Obſervations never coſt the Kingdom ſuch Expence of Money at Home, and Loſſes at Sea, as hath the Experience of thoſe honourable Perſons in Sea-Affairs.

*Firſt*, It is argued by ſome, that we want Purchaſers for our Lands. This a melancholly Conſideration! I therefore deſire thoſe Gentlemen who approve of this Bill, to tell me what it is hath brought us to this Condition, that the landed Men of *England* are reduced to ſo low an Ebb, that they muſt ſell, and none are left to buy, unleſs Foreigners are naturalized? Doth this prove our Forefathers Want of Underſtanding? Or doth it not rather conclude it is occaſioned by our Want of it, and by our not following their Examples, who never taxed their Country to the Ruin both of themſelves and their Poſterity? Nor did they expend the Money of the Kingdom on ſuch Allies as ours, who, as we have been informed by ſome of the Privy-Council, are not in our Intereſt, and will ſpare us none of their Men for our Pay, without great Penſions likeways for themſelves. Can any Man hope to perſuade me, that our Foreſathers would have brought foreign Soldi-

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ers into *England*, and pay them, and naturalize them likeways, and at the ſame Time ſend the *Engliſh* Soldiers Abroad, to fight in a ſtrange Land without their Pay?

Let us abate our Taxes, and, after the wiſe Precedent of our Forefathers, pay our own Seamen and Soldiers at Home, and ſend the Foreigners back; then the Money will be found circulating at Home, in ſuch *Engliſhmens* Hands who may buy the Lands that are to be ſold, without naturalizing Strangers.

*Secondly*, It is ſaid we want more Merchants. Who may we thank for bringing ſo many to Poverty? But I ſhall forbear grating, and deſire the Liberty to conſider, in ſhort, how the Trade of *England* hath hitherto been carried on. Gentlemen have placed their younger Children to Merchants; their Maſters, obſerving their Honeſty and Diligence, when they have gained ſome Experience in the neceſſary Parts of Trade, generally ſend them abroad to *Turkey*, all Parts of the *Levant*, to *Spain*, *Portugal*, the *Eaſt* and *Weſt-Indies*, and to all Parts where *England* holds any conſiderable Commerce; there the young Men are employed by, and intruſted with the Stocks and Eſtates of their Maſters and Friends, whereby all Parties, both the Principals at Home, and the Factors abroad, are advantaged, and *England* enriched, (for there, in the End, all centres) and at laſt, when they are ſatiated with Gain, they return to their native Soil, their Friends and Relations, for Eaſe

and

and Enjoyment, making Room for a younger Generation to ſucceed in their profitable Employments. Thus hitherto this Kingdom hath advanced in Riches, whilſt Foreigners could not, with Succeſs, plant their Factories on us, through the Advantage we had by our Laws. Let us but turn the Tables, and conſider the Conſequence: Suppoſe we paſs this Bill, and Foreigners (who no Doubt will take the Oaths as this Bill directs, and proteſt againſt *Popery* and *Paganiſm*, and, on Occaſion, Chriſtianity too, as at *Japan*) ſend their Servants and Factors hither, and we naturalize them, and let the Capital Stock, which gets an Employ to theſe new-made *Engliſhmen*, belong to their Maſters and Friends, who never did, nor ever will live amongſt us, Will it not then follow, that the Profit will be theirs, and not *England*'s? And will not the new-made *Engliſh* (yet Foreigners ſtill) return to their Country and Friends with their Gain, as our People hitherto have done? We may obſerve, by our *Inland* Trade, that it is ſeldom they who make the Manufactures gain Eſtates, but thoſe who employ their Stocks in buying and ſelling what others make; and it is the ſame with the Merchants, thoſe that export and import are the Gainers; the firſt Maker very ſeldom, the Conſumptioner never.

The Concluſion then of this Experiment muſt be this, that what hath hitherto been Gain to *England*, by *Engliſh* Merchants and Factors, will be

be turned to a foreign Land, by the foreign Merchants naturalized for their own Good, not *England*'s.

But this is not all, for at once the Art of Navigation will be rendred uſeleſs. Whence then will be a Nurſery for Seamen? For foreign Merchants will naturalize foreign Seamen, and, when the Preſs-Maſters find them, they will *Dutchen ſpraken, ya min Heer*, and avoid the Service; but at the Cuſtom-Houſe, Exchange, and in all Corporations, they will be found as good *Engliſhmen* as any be of this Houſe. From whence it followeth, that Trade will be only carried on by foreign Merchants and Seamen, and the *Engliſh* Seamen condemned to our Men of War, and perhaps live there, as hitherto, without their Pay, till another Million be owing them for Wages, and in the Interim have this only Coſnolation and Reward for Service done and to be done, that their Wives and Children may be ſubſiſted with the Alms of the Pariſh, whilſt foreign Soldiers are maintained at Home and Abroad with their Pay.

A third Argument, for admitting Foreigners, is upon a ſuppoſed Want we have of Manufacturers, eſpecially ſuch as will work cheaper than the *Engliſh*. In my Opinion this Reaſoning is extraordinary, and ought not to take Air out of this Houſe, leſt the old *Engliſh* Spirit ſhould exert itſelf in Defence of its Liberties: For at this Time, when all Proviſions are become

come exceſſive dear by the great Quantities exported beyond Sea, which puts the poor *Engliſh* Manufacturers on ſtarving in moſt Parts of *England*, for Want of a full Employ to enable them to ſupport their Families by their honeſt and painful Labour and Induſtry, Shall an *Engliſh* Parliament let in Strangers to underſel our Country, which they may eaſily do, whilſt they live in Garrets, pay no Taxes, and are bound to no Duty?

How ſhall we anſwer this to our Country who ſent us here, when, by ſo doing, inſtead of making the Kingdom more populous, we provide only for the Subſiſtence of Foreigners, and put our Countrymen to the Choice of ſtarving at Home, or to turn Soldiers, and be ſent Abroad, and to ſtarve there for Want of their Pay? For it is well known, that, at this Time, more Commodities are made in *England*, than can be conſumed Abroad, or at Home, which makes the poor Manufacturers ſo miſerable. All Country Gentlemen within this Houſe, have, for ſeveral Seſſions, laboured what they could to raiſe the Price of the Proviſions which their Lands produce, and ſome think it not great enough yet; and they would deſpiſe that Man who ſhall endeavour to lower the Rates, by propoſing a free Importation of *Iriſh* Cattle and Corn, tho' he had no other Deſign than that charitable and neceſſary one of relieving the Poor: And yet theſe very Gentlemen are for this Bill, becauſe they would

would have the Labour of the Poor brought to a lower Advantage. In my Opinion, this is a very unequal Way of Reaſoning, that, whilſt we raiſe the Price of the Product of the Land, for the Gentlemen to live in greater State, at the ſame Time, our Conſults are, how to make the half-ſtarved Manufacturers, that live by their daily Labour, more and more miſerable. What Opinion will the common People of *England* have of this Houſe, and the Gentlemen of the Kingdom, whom nothing can pleaſe but what is made by Foreigners, or comes from Abroad?

Our Palates, for a long Time, have been ſo nice, that nothing but a *French* Cook could pleaſe; nor could we perſuade ourſelves that our Clothing was good, unleſs from Head to Foot we were *à la mode de France*. The Gentleman was not well ſerved without a *Frenchman*, and the Lady's Commode could not ſit right, if her fine *Frenchwoman* did not put it on. Now, on a ſudden, the Change is as violent in favour of the *Dutch*, who are great Courtiers, and the only taking People; and our *Engliſh* are a Sort of clumſy-fiſted People, if compared with the modiſh *Dutch Ians* and *Frows*; and, in ſhort, the *Engliſhmen* are fit for nothing, but to be ſent beyond Sea, and there either to fight, ſteal, or ſtarve for Want of Pay. There is one Thing, Mr. *Speaker*, which comes into my Mind, with which I ſhall cloſe this Conſideration. What Reaſon was there

for blaming the Mayors, Aldermen, Common-Councils, and other Governors of Corporations, for ſurrendring their Charters, though they ſtill retained the Rights for *Engliſhmen* only to come into new Charters, and at the ſame Time hope to juſtify our Proceedings, though we throw up the great Charter of our *Engliſh* Liberties, to admit Strangers?

A fourth Pretence for this Bill, is a Want of Husbandmen to till the Ground. I ſhall ſay little on this Head, but requeſt the honourable Perſon below me, to tell me, of the forty thouſand *French*, which he confeſſeth are come into *England*, how many does he know, that, at this Time, follow the Plough-Tail? For it is my firm Opinion, that not only the *French*, but any other Nation this Bill ſhall let in upon us, will never tranſplant themſelves for the Benefit of going to Plough; they will contentedly leave to the *Engliſh* the ſole Monopoly of that Slavery.

Upon the Whole, Sir, it is my Judgment, that, ſhould this Bill paſs, it will bring as great Afflictions on this Nation, as ever fell upon the *Ægyptians*; and one of their Plagues we have at this Time very ſevere upon us; I mean, that of their Land bringing forth Frogs in Abundance, even in the Chambers of their Kings: For there is no entring the Courts of *St. James's* and *Whitehall*, the Palaces of our hereditary Kings, for the great Noiſe and Croaking of the Frog-Landers.

Mr.

Mr. *Speaker*, this Nation is a religious, juſt, and zealous Nation, who, in ſome of their Fits and Zeal, have not only quarrelled and fought for the ſame, but have murdered and depoſed Kings, Nobles, Biſhops and Prieſts, for the Sake of their Religion and Liberties, which they pretended to vindicate from the Bible. We are the religious Repreſentatives of this religious People; let us therefore learn Inſtruction, in this Caſe before us, from that good Book, where we may be informed, that *St. Paul*, by being born free of heathen *Rome*, eſcaped a Whipping, and valued and pleaded that Privilege; and the chief Captain of the *Romans* prides himſelf, that he, with a great Sum, had obtained that Freedom, and feared greatly when he had violated *St. Paul's* Liberty, by only binding of him. And ſhall we ſet at naught the Freedoms of the *Engliſh* Nation, who are a religious Chriſtian Kingdom, and part with the ſame to Strangers for nothing, unleſs the Undoing of our own Countrymen, who ſent us here, *but not on this Errand?* Certainly we ſhould follow the Example of the *Roman* Captain, and fear and tremble when we conſider the juſt Provocation we ſhall give to the Kingdom, who will expect we ſhould preſerve, and not deſtroy every *Engliſhman's* Birth-Right.

Sir, we may farther learn, from that Book, the Fate of the *Ægyptians*, who experimented, on the Score of Charity, what it is a People may expect from admitting Strangers into their Country

Country and Councils. *Joseph* was a Stranger, sold a Slave into *Ægypt*, yet, being taken into *Pharaoh*'s Council, he, by Taxes and other fine Projects, brought the seven Years Plenty, God had blest the *Ægyptians* with, into the Granaries of *Pharoah*; but when Dearth came on the Land, and the People cried to their King for Relief, they were sent to the Stranger *Joseph*, who getteth from them, for that which was once their own, all their Money, their Cattle, their Lands, and, last of all, their Persons into Slavery; tho'; at the same Time, he did far otherways by his own Countrymen, for he placed them in the best of the Land, the Land of *Goshen*, and nourished them from the King's Stores. This Example should teach us to be wise in Time, seeing all this was done by the Advice of one Foreigner in the Privy Council: And what may that Country expect, where the Head, and many of the Council are Foreigners?

Sir, I perceive some Gentlemen are uneasy; perhaps I have offended them, in supposing they are religious Representatives, or concluding, that their Religion is to be proved from the Bible: If that be it which displeaseth, I beg their Pardon, and promise not to offend again on that Score; and will conclude all with this Motion, That the Serjeant be commanded to open the Doors, and let us first kick the Bill out of the HOUSE, and then all Foreigners out of the KINGDOM.

*F I N I S.*